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# 10 Steps to Choosing Your Senior Care Services

Deciding which senior care services you or a family member may need is not always a simple process. Everyone has a unique combination of needs, which often change over time. Some seniors can live in their homes with minimal care, and others have health conditions that require a little helping hand. The following are 10 steps to take or issues to address in the process of choosing elder care services to match your individual circumstances. By taking into account some or all of these steps, seniors and their families can more accurately discover which services or level of care they actually need.

# 01 Identifying Individuals Needs

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One of the first steps to take when selecting senior care services is to consider individual needs. If a senior wishes to live at home and has a few health issues, then that person may benefit from the services of a visiting home care worker. However, an elderly person who takes any medications, is experiencing the onset dementia, or has trouble performing basic functions – such as dressing, grooming, getting out of bed, etc. – could be better suited in a personal care community or nursing home.

## 02 Make a List

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Once a family member begins to assess the various needs of a beloved elder, making a list of these details can be helpful. When a senior and his or her family are ready to consider various professionals and facilities, having this list handy could be crucial. Instead of relying on memory to discuss assorted needs and health conditions with a healthcare professional, an elder and his/her family can refer to the list – this can help ensure that important details are not forgotten.

## 03 Ask the Right Questions

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Knowing the right questions to ask is also essential. This is another topic that may be first explored by making a list, and it all depends on the individual. An elder and a family member should discuss which questions are most relevant to the circumstances, and they can then devise a list to bring along during consultations and interviews. One of the top questions to ask might be whether a professional is licensed or whether a facility is accredited.

## 04 Look for an Organization with Multiple Locations

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One concern may be the physical distance between family members and the senior care facility. In that case, an organization with several locations may be the most appropriate choice, especially if a senior's family is planning a residential move in the future. Having several locations from which to choose also means that a family may have a better chance of finding a nearby facility.

## 05 Ask About Accessibility to Medical Equipment

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Whether your elderly loved one has one health issue or several conditions, quick access to medical equipment could be necessary. Discuss the potential need for such equipment with a facility representative, and ask how the organization handles medical equipment's ordering. Having certain items available in a timely manner could save a senior's life.



## 06 Seek Out Caregiver Support

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Another factor worth considering is whether the non-professional caregivers related to your elder have access to support. A relative who cares for an elderly person may require occasional assistance. This kind of professional support may enable a senior to remain in their home for as long as the family member is able to provide proper care. Many organizations also offer support groups for family members of those with a certain ailment, such as dementia.

## 07 Explore Your Physical Therapy Options

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A senior who has recently suffered from a fall or a stroke may need physical therapy. This service might not be offered at all facilities in an area, so asking about this option before making a decision is wise. Even if your loved one doesn't need physical therapy at this point, it is likely that he/she might in the future. And if that need arises, it's better to be with an organization that offers physical therapy in its family of services. Also, ask the senior care center you are interested in if their physical therapists are on staff or contracted from another company.

## 08 Consider Receiving In-Home Personal Care

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Countless elderly people function well enough in their homes as long as they can get some assistance with personal care. When looking at home care agencies to provide that assistance, make sure you ask about their licensure, employee screening process and how long they have been in business, to make sure they are a reputable company. It's also important to establish exactly which tasks their professionals are trained or able to perform, such as preparing meals according to special nutritional requirements.

## 09 Check for Independent Living Opportunities

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Many seniors thrive in a retirement community environment. This is another feature to ask about when interviewing professionals and facilities. If an elder is currently living at home with minimal care, but just wants added security and to rid themselves of house and property maintenance, then a move to a retirement community could be exactly what they need.



## 10 Discuss Your Hospice Options

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When considering various senior care services, this is one factor that should not be overlooked. In an ideal situation, the senior care organization you are interested in will have its own hospice company or service. Knowing that your loved one is receiving proper hospice care, if ever needed, can be a great comfort to loving family members. Trained professionals know how to make end-of life situations as comfortable as possible.

Every senior deserves to make the most of their “golden” years. At Concordia, we believe all seniors should be treated with dignity and respect, and elderly people should have access to superior professional care. By taking a few basic steps and addressing a few common issues, a senior and his or her loved ones can ensure that the best possible care is available, no matter what senior care services are needed.



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Administrative Headquarters: 134 Marwood Road,  
Cabot, PA 16023  
724-352-1571 • [concordialm.org](http://concordialm.org)